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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/752,580	12/27/2000	Edward G. Yong	1944	1637

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GATEWAY, INC.
ATTN: SCOTT CHARLES RICHARDSON
610 GATEWAY DR., Y-04
N. SIOUX CITY, SD 57049

EXAMINER

KANG, PAUL H

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

2141

DATE MAILED: 07/08/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/752,580

Applicant(s)

YONG

Examiner

Paul H Kang

Art Unit

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).

Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 07 November 2002.
2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-22 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-22 is/are rejected.
7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 2.
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nielsen, US Pat. No. 6,108,688, in view of Knowles et al., US Pat. No. 5,905,863.

2. As to claims 1, 10, 18 and 21, Nielsen teaches the invention substantially as claimed. Nielsen teaches a method for responding to an electronic mail message selected by a user, where the user accesses a mailbox adapted to store one or more electronic mail messages, each electronic mail message having a unique identifier and an identifier storage field (Nielsen, col. 1, line 11 – col. 2, line 30), the method comprising the steps of:

retrieving the unique identifier of the selected electronic mail message (Nielsen, col. 1, line 11 – col. 2, line 30).

However, Nielsen does not explicitly teach searching the mailbox for at least one related electronic mail message having the unique identifier of the selected electronic mail message in the identifier storage field of said related electronic mail message; and providing information relating to results of said searching the mailbox step.

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In the same field of endeavor, Knowles teaches searching the mailbox for at least one related electronic mail message having the unique identifier of the selected electronic mail message in the identifier storage field of said related electronic mail message; and providing information relating to results of said searching the mailbox step (Knowles, col. 1 line 36 – col. 3, line 63 and col. 4, lines 7-50).

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have incorporated the search features as taught by Knowles, into the email system of Nielsen, for the purpose of creating an effective message threading system.

3. As to claims 2 and 3, Nielsen-Knowles teach the method further comprising the step of displaying to the user said information relating to said results of said searching the mailbox step, executed in response to a request from the user to respond to the selected electronic mail message (Nielsen, col. 1, line 11 – col. 2, line 30; Knowles, col. 1 line 36 – col. 3, line 63 and col. 4, lines 7-50).

4. As to claims 4, 5 and 12, Nielsen-Knowles teach the results of the search comprises a count of said related emails and the unique identifier (Nielsen, col. 1, line 11 – col. 2, line 30; Knowles, col. 1 line 36 – col. 3, line 63 and col. 4, lines 7-50).

5. As to claims 6-9, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20 and 22, Nielsen-Knowles teach the method wherein each electronic mail message further comprises a time field for storing a sent time, and wherein said searching the mailbox step further comprises the step of searching the time field of each said

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related electronic mail message for a sent time later than the sent time of the selected electronic mail message, wherein the results are determined by the searching step and displayed to the user (Nielsen, col. 1, line 11 – col. 2, line 30 and col. 3, line 8 – col. 4, line 31).

6. As to claim 11, Nielsen-Knowles teach the method wherein said related emails are determined to be sent in response to the first email if the unique identifier of the first email is stored in the identifier storage field of said related email (Nielsen, col. 1, line 11 – col. 2, line 30 and col. 3, line 8 – col. 4, line 31; Knowles, col. 9, lines 63-67 and col. 10, lines 16-20).

7. As to claim 13, Nielsen-Knowles teach listing related emails wherein the listing includes at least one of a sender, recipient, subject, sent time and a message body (Nielsen, col. 1, line 11 – col. 2, line 30 and col. 3, line 8 – col. 4, line 31; Knowles, col. 9, lines 63-67 and col. 10, lines 16-20).

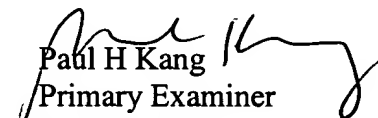
8. As to claim 14, Nielsen-Knowles teach generating a reply email (Nielsen, col. 1, line 11 – col. 2, line 30 and col. 3, line 8 – col. 4, line 31; Knowles, col. 9, lines 63-67 and col. 10, lines 16-20).

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Paul H Kang whose telephone number is (703) 308-6123. The examiner can normally be reached on 9 hour flex. First Friday.

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Rupal Dharia can be reached on (703) 305-4003. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Paul H Kang
Primary Examiner
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